

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 /021 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:AF/W:TWMSMITH:BA

APPROVED BY:AF/W-THOMAS W.M.SMITH

EUR/SOV:BMZOOK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

UNCLAS STATE 103142

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 103142 ACTION MOSCOW APR 28 REPEATED TO
ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS 30 APR.

QUOTE: UNCLAS STATE 103142

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UR, US, XA

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFING ON CANCELLATION OF SECRETARY'S
VISIT TO GHANA

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S APRIL 28 NEWS
BRIEFING DISCUSSED THE US ATTITUDE TOWARD CANCELLATION OF
THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO GHANA AND SOVIET INVOLVEMENT
THEREIN:

QUOTE:

Q. CONCERNING THE NON-VISIT TO GHANA, DOES THE ADMINI-
STRATION BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
CANCELLATION OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIP?

A. GEORGE, I THINK THAT SUBJECT WAS ADDRESSED BY THE
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SECRETARY'S PARTY YESTERDAY. I HAVE NOTHING REALLY TO
ADD TO WHAT WAS SAID AT THAT TIME, WHICH HAS ALREADY AP-
PEARED.

Q. HAVE WE PROTESTED TO THE SOVIETS?

A. WE HAVE BEEN IN COMMUNICATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH THE GOVERNMENTS OF GHANA AND THE SOVIET UNION

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CANCELLATION AND WE HAVE MADE KNOWN OUR SERIOUS VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THAT CANCELLATION.

Q. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON BEING IN TOUCH WITH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT?

A. I SAID REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF GHANA AND THE SOVIET UNION.

Q. COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOVIET UNION? DID WE PROTEST IN MOSCOW OR WHAT DID WE DO?

A. I AM NOT USING THE WORD "PROTEST". I DO NOT INTEND TO CHARACTERIZE IT AS A PROTEST. I SAID THAT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED ARE FULLY AWARE OF OUR SERIOUS VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE CANCELLATION.

Q. WHEN, WHERE AND HOW WERE WE IN CONTACT WITH SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES?

A. THE CONTACT, IN BOTH CASES, WAS HERE IN WASHINGTON; AND I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AS TO THE LEVEL OR THE NATURE OF THE CONTACT, BUT I CAN SAY IT TOOK PLACE IN WASHINGTON.

Q. DID WE CALL SOMEBODY IN FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY HERE TO THE DEPARTMENT TO BE TOLD THAT WE DIDN'T LIKE THIS?

A. I CAN JUST SAY THAT THE CONTACT WAS HERE IN WASHINGTON.
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AS TO THE NATURE OF IT, WHO DID IT, ET CETERA, WHAT THE REPRESENTATION OF OUR VIEWS CONTAINED, I SIMPLY CANNOT GO INTO DETAIL ON IT.

Q. WELL, THE FACT THAT WE BOTHERED TO CALL THEM IN WOULD IMPLY THAT WE ARE THOROUGHLY CONVINCED OR FEEL THAT WE HAVE ADEQUATE PROOF THAT THE SOVIETS WERE IN FACT BEHIND IT. I MEAN IT SORT OF CAME AS AN ALLEGATION OUT OF THE SECRETARY'S PARTY. BUT DO WE HAVE THIS FIRMLY PROVEN-- ENOUGH THAT WE CAN CALL THEM IN AND SAY THAT THEY WERE SOMEHOW INVOLVED?

A. I DO KNOW THAT WHAT YOU CHARACTERIZE AS "PROOF"

EXISTS. I DO KNOW THAT WE FELT STRONGLY ENOUGH ABOUT IT TO MAKE OUR VIEWS ON THE MATTER VERY CLEARLY KNOWN TO THE SOVIETS HERE IN WASHINGTON.

Q. WHAT ARE OUR VIEWS ON THE MATTER?

A. THAT WE VIEW IT WITH SOME CONCERN.

A. WHAT?

A. THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT TO GHANA.

A. WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

A. I CANNOT REALLY GIVE YOU ANYTHING MORE ON IT THAN WHAT WAS SAID YESTERDAY, HENRY, OUT OF--I THINK THE REPORTS CAME FROM KINSHASA. THAT IS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE YOU HAVE.

Q. WHAT HAS AMBASSADOR BLACK BEEN REPORTING? HAS SHE DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE GHANAIAI GOVERNMENT?

A. I WOULD PRESUME SO, SINCE THE NOTIFICATION OF THE CANCELLATION STEMMED FROM HER AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.

Q. FRED--

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A. I CERTAINLY THINK SHE HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND WITH THE SECRETARY, OF COURSE,

Q. --YOU KNOW, THIS ISN'T A GAME WE'RE PLAYING IN HERE. THE UNITED STATES FEELS THAT THE SOVIET UNION UNDULY INFLUENCED THE GHANAIAI GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT THE SECRETARY FROM VISITING--IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

A. I AM SAYING THAT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO ELABORATE BEYOND WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE COMING FROM THE SECRETARY'S PARTY, WHICH IS NOW IN KINSHASA.

Q. CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO US THE NATURE OF THE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN GHANA? ARE THEY RUNNING THE PLACE NOW?

A. I DO NOT KNOW, HENRY. I WOULD NOT CARE TO DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF THE SOVIET INFLUENCE THERE.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT FEEL THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT EXERCISED ANY INFLUENCE ON NIGERIA TO CANCEL THE PRESIDENT'S (SIC) TRIPS, OR ON MOZAMBIQUE, TO NOT GO TO MOZAMBIQUE?

A. I HAVE NO INFORMATION WHATSOEVER ON THAT, KEN.

Q. SO THE ONLY INFORMATION YOU DO HAVE IS THAT THE SOVIETS EXERCISED SOME INFLUENCE IN GHANA TO PREVENT THE SECRETARY FROM STOPPING THERE?

A. THE SUBJECT OF OUR COMMUNICATION TO THE SOVIETS WAS THE CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT, TO GHANA.

Q. THERE WAS NOT REFERENCE TO ANY OTHER LEGS ON THE TRIP IN WHICH THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE TRIED TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE?

A. NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHO WAS CALLED IN FROM THE SOVIET UNION, OR WAS SOMEBODY ASKED TO COME DOWN HERE, AND WHO WAS IT?

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A. NO, I CAN'T GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE SAID ON THIS, HENRY.

Q. WAS IT SAID ON THE PHONE?

A. I CAN'T GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE SAID.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW, OR YOU CAN'T TELL US, OR YOU WON'T TELL US? I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU USUALLY WILL SAY THAT SOMEONE WAS CALLED IN OR IT WAS DONE ON THE TELEPHONE. WHY ARE YOU BEING COY IN THIS?

A. I AM NOT BEING COY. I AM SAYING--

Q. YOU ARE BEING VERY SILLY, I WOULD HAVE TO SAY, THEN.

A. PARDON ME?

Q. YOU ARE BEING SILLY. YOU WON'T TELL US WHETHER IT WAS EVEN DONE ON THE TELEPHONE OR DONE IN PERSON.

A. I AM NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE SAID ON IT.

Q. DOES THE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY INDICATIONS OF PREVIOUS SOVIET PRESSURE OR INFLUENCE IN GHANA TO TRY TO BLOCK THIS VISIT UP TO NOW? IS THIS SUDDENLY SOMETHING THAT CAME OUT OF THE BLUE OR WHAT'S THE BACKGROUND TO IT?

A. I DO NOT KNOW, HENRY. I DO NOT KNOW ANY PREVIOUS BACKGROUND ON IT WHATSOEVER.

Q. ARE THERE ANY OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE

SOVIETS HAVE TRIED TO BLOCK THE SECRETARY'S VISIT THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHETHER THE AMERICAN COMMENT TO THE RUSSIANS TODAY WAS LIMITED SIMPLY TO THIS GHANAIAAN CANCELLATION?

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A. I THINK I ALREADY SAID THAT THE SUBJECT OF OUR COMMUNICATION WITH THE SOVIETS YESTERDAY WAS LIMITED TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT TO GHANA.

Q. IT WAS LIMITED TO THAT?

A. YES, THAT WAS THE SUBJECT OF IT, AND IT WAS LIMITED TO IT AS FAR AS I KNOW.

Q. YOU SAID IT WAS THE SUBJECT, WHICH DOESN'T NECESSESARILY MAKE IT LIMITED TO IT.

A. AS FAR AS I KNOW, IT WAS CONFINED TO THAT SPECIFIC SUBJECT; I.E., THE CANCELLATION OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO GHANA.

Q. WAS THERE ANY COUNTERACTION THAT THE UNITED STATES POSED AS A POSSIBILITY?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. WHAT'S THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THIS ON FUTURE RELATIONSBETWEEN THE U.S. AND RUSSIA?

A. I WOULD NOT CARE TO SPECULATE ON THAT.

Q. IS IT SEEN AS A REPRISAL FOR A RECENT CUTOFF OF THE THREE CONFERENCES OR COMMUNICATIONS THAT ARE GOING ON BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA? THERE ARETHREE LEVELS OF CONTACT.

A. I REALLY WOULD NOT CARE TO SPECULATE ON WHAT THE FUTURE EFFECT OF THIS MIGHT BE OR ANYTHING ELSE HAVING TO DO WITH THE STATE OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS BEYOND

THE SPECIFIC CASE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE CANCELLATION OF THE GHANA VISIT. I WOULD NOT WANT TO EXPAND THAT IN ANY WAY TO INCLUDE OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

Q. FRED, THERE WERE SOME EXPECTATIONS THAT THE SECRETARY

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WAS GOING TO SIGN A COMMODITY AGREEMENT TO RESTRICT THE
FLUCTUATION OF PRICES OF RAW MATERIALS FROM GHANA. WILL
THAT AGREEMENT STILL BE SIGNED, OR IS IT BEING CANCELLED,
OR WHAT?

A. I HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THAT WHATSOEVER. BY THE
WAY, YOU ASKED ME WHAT FORM THE COMMUNICATION TOOK
BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOVIET
UNION. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT FORM, WHETHER IT WAS PERSONAL
OR BY TELEPHONE OR BY TELEGRAM OR BY LETTER OR WHAT HAVE
YOU. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. WILL YOU TAKE THE QUESTION?

A. OKAY, I WILL TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q. AND GHANA ALSO.

A. ALL RIGHT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, INTERVENTION, MINISTERIAL VISITS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE103142
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter:
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760168-0085
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197605109/baaaeosw.tel
Line Count: 298
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: schwenja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2004 by wolfsd>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by schwenja>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 970929
Subject: PRESS BRIEFING ON CANCELLATION OF SECRETARY'S
TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, UR, US, XA, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: ACCRA
LAGOS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006